



Puerto Rico

POP 3.5 MILLION / 787

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ José Enrique (p601)
- ➔ Luquillo Beach Kiosks (p606)
- ➔ El Quenepo (p612)
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Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ The Dream Catcher (p599)
- ➔ Condado Vanderbilt Hotel (p599)
- ➔ Hacienda Tamarindo (p611)
- ➔ Tres Sirenas (p617)

Why Go?

Golden sand, swashbuckling history and wildly diverse terrain make the sun-washed backyard of the United States a place fittingly hyped as the 'Island of Enchantment.' It's the Caribbean's only island where you can catch a wave before breakfast, hike a rainforest after lunch and race to the beat of a high-gloss, cosmopolitan city after dark. Between blinking casinos and chirping frogs, Puerto Rico is also a land of dynamic contrasts, where the breezy gate of the Caribbean is bedeviled by the hustle of contemporary American culture.

A quick visit for Puerto Rico's beaches, historic forts and nightclubs will quicken a visitor's pulse, but the island's singular essence reveals itself to those who go deeper, exploring the misty crags of its mountains and pastel facades of the island's remote corners.

When to Go

Mid-Dec-mid-Apr & Jul Crowds escaping the frosty US mainland in winter see hotel rates go up and seasonal attractions come to life. In July, local families create a second high season, filling beach towns.

Sep-Nov & mid-Apr-May Puerto Rico's tourist infrastructure takes a breather to regroup during shoulder season, though there isn't a significant fluctuation in prices or services.

Jun-Nov Apart from July, things get pretty lethargic during hurricane season; some resorts offer discounted packages, but prices at small hotels don't drop precipitously.

Puerto Rico Highlights

1 Old San Juan (p593)

Being seduced by the charm and beauty of the old town while wandering the blue cobblestone streets

2 El Yunque National Forest (p605)

Hiking on lush rainforest trails with views of the ocean beyond.

3 Culebra (p607) and Vieques (p610)

Reveling in

some of the best beaches in the Caribbean plus kayaking in bioluminescent waters.

4 Museo de Arte de Ponce (p613)

Falling in love with

Flaming June in the cultural hot spot of Ponce.

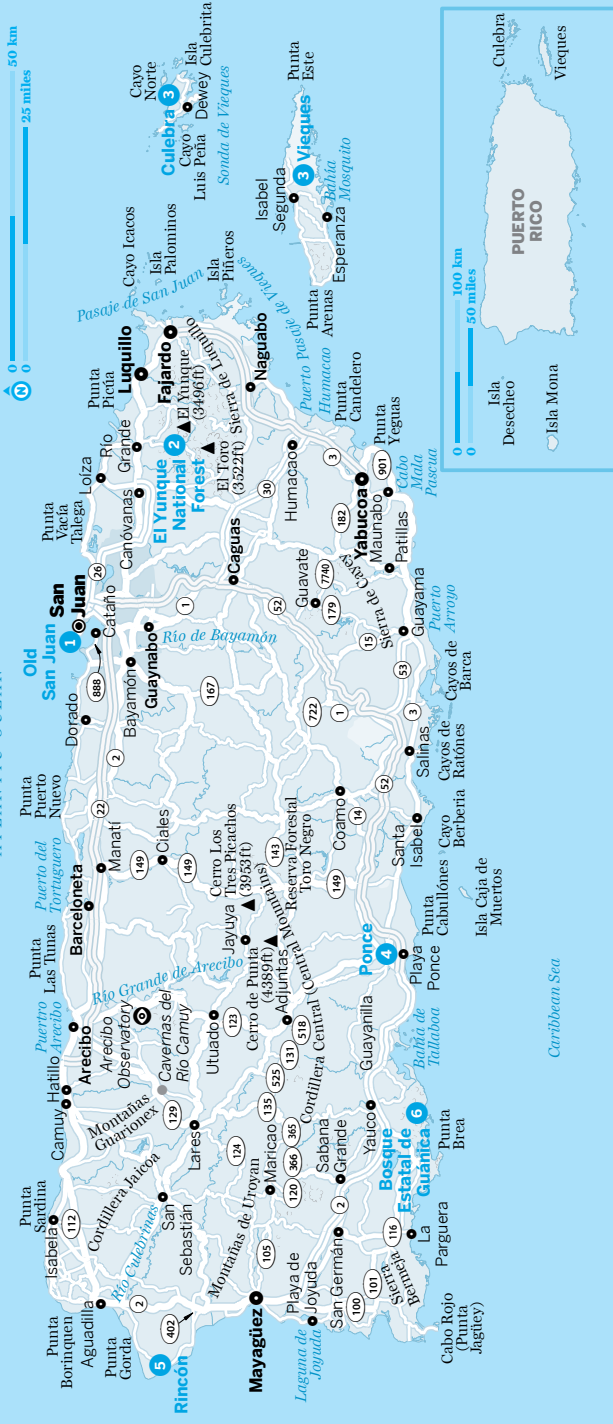
5 Rincón (p616)

Surfing beside beach bums and vacationing businessmen on legendary breaks.

6 Bosque Estatal de Guánica (p616)

Hiking or mountain biking the birding trails of one of the best examples of a subtropical dry forest on the planet.

ATLANTIC OCEAN



Caribbean Sea